



MONTEREY NEWS

January 2003
VOLUME XXXIII · Number 1



The Town

Areas of Concern

The single biggest cause of fits at the Selectboard meetings is the breakdown of communication. People get upset when they don't get the when, why, how, who, and what they need. The second biggest cause of fits is how tight the money has gotten all of a sudden. The anticipated loss of State funds for Chapter 90 projects and the schools will "force the Town to make tough choices at Town Meeting." The School Committee is currently negotiating teacher salaries and health insurance benefits, which account for a substantial portion of the budget, without knowing how drastic the State cutbacks will be. The Board once again pondered how to get people to Town Meeting. Michael Storch declared that those who don't participate in Town affairs are "lazy."

Taxes

By now you should have received impact notices from the tax collector, but not your tax bill. As of this writing, tax bills have not been mailed because the tax rate was not set until late December. Town Treasurer Pat Mielke expressed thanks to all those who have sent in estimated tax payments in advance of receiving their tax bills. In September, the Selectboard was assured that tax bills would be sent no later than the first week



Michael Storch

Santa paid a visit to the Monterey Coffee Club just before Christmas.

in November. It is unclear at this point what caused the delay, but as the Board became increasingly concerned they called the Department of Revenue each week to try to move things along. At a recent meeting with the Assessors, there was speculation that early retirements of experienced personnel have left the DOR short-staffed. It is also unclear whether anyone really understands the process and how to expedite it.

What did become clear during the meeting is that all parties involved need to be in close communication on an ongoing basis. The hope is that in the future the task will be done in a timely way, making tax money available sooner. New

growth figures are needed by the Board to prepare the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Meanwhile the Town has spent close to \$4,000 since November 15 on interest for loans to cover the cash shortfall. The need for quarterly tax bills is once again being discussed. Until tax bills are paid, the Town will need to continue borrowing to fund operations.

In a late-breaking development, the tax rate for the current fiscal year has been set at 7.9 per \$1,000 of valuation.

Fire Truck Delivery

The delivery of the new fire truck is three months ahead of schedule. Unfortunately this will further stress the Town's

finances. After the truck has been inspected and accepted the Town will need to come up with \$212,000. Most likely this will have to be borrowed. Monthly payments on the balance due for the truck begin in July.

Emergency Planning

The first meeting to form a local emergency planning committee was held at the Monterey Firehouse on December 2. Attending were the members of the Selectboard, Chief Tryon, Chief Backhaus, Director of Operations Forbes, Bud Rogers, Del Martin, Kathy Tryon, Michael Storch, Linda Thorpe, who will serve as clerk, and Michele Miller. A free-ranging discussion took place. Of primary concern was identifying different types of emergencies, what responses might be required, and who would assume responsibility for different aspects of dealing with emergency situations. Toxic spills, airplane crashes, weather emergencies, and dealing with refugees from nuclear or terrorist incidents are some examples of situations that would need management.

Each member of the committee will focus on one area as described in the State mandate: coordinating media response, transportation, public health, schools, etc. Other members of the community will be sought to round out the team. An open house to engage members of the community was proposed. The next meeting will be held on January 13 at 7 p.m.

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The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.

Town Hall Construction

Architect David Bixby attended the December 23rd Selectboard meeting prepared to finalize details prior to bids going out in early January and was surprised to find himself in the hotseat. Members of the Finance Committee grilled him on the per square foot cost of the construction estimate, which they felt was high. Mr. Bixby explained that the nature of the project necessarily puts it beyond residential construction in cost. Most significant is the State mandated prevailing wage rate required for municipal construction projects. Other significant factors include the factors that the project is a renovation, that a special foundation is required for the records storage room, and that the square-foot price reflects the finished basement, which is above grade in some spots. At the current estimate we will be paying \$165/sq. ft. for 2100 sq. ft. of finished space. The Finance Committee was placated and the bids will go out.

Mass Electric Response to Power Outages

Five senior management representatives visited the Board meeting on December 16th in response to a letter complaining of slow response times in dealing with power outages and downed lines. They explained that they respond to "no

power" calls as they come in, which has been west to east lately, and call in out of area crews as soon as they determine that their own crews will be overwhelmed. The problems seem to be due in part to lack of communication. The group provided local officials with local direct contact telephone numbers so they will no longer have to rely on Great Barrington emergency dispatchers.

It was noted that 75 to 80 percent of trees that fall are on private property. During the most recent outage an individual who attempted to drive over a downed tree tangled in wires got stuck, causing a potentially life-threatening situation and tying up the Town's sole police officer for several hours. Citizens are reminded to stay away from downed wires and find another route to their destination. Mass Electric officials reassured the Town that they will continue their efforts to please everyone all the time.

Salary Committee Report

Members of the Salary Committee came to the Selectboard meeting on December 9th to explain the work that they had previously presented for review. There was some confusion over what their mandate was in the minds of the Board and what they had taken as their task. Director of Operations Maynard Forbes expressed his disappointment over



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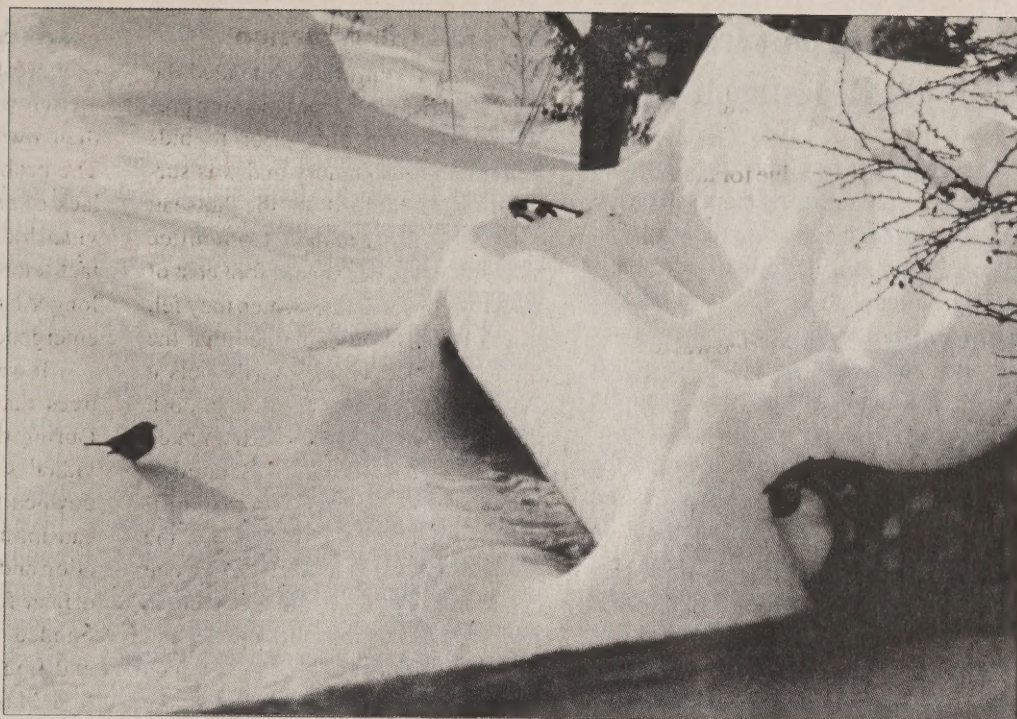
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lack of action on his raise and on his recommendations for four new categories of worker in his department. The Salary Committee made clear that they did not feel it was their role to make recommendations but rather to establish a framework for the Board to use in assigning compensation. Where to set base levels is up to the Board. "It's a political decision not a financial one," said one member. The Committee looked at many different factors in compiling their framework, but in the end the jobs are specific to the Town and the Town must decide how much we are willing to pay for services. The cost will reflect increases each year for salaries and benefits. Up till now turn-over has been low, which would indicate that there is general job satisfaction. The meeting concluded with the Committee agreeing to do more work to determine appropriate compensation for salaried employees; Barbara Gauthier will report on what increases will mean to the town budget over the long term.

Glynn Oliver



Junco in Christmas snow

Lake Garfield Public Access

Also on December 9th, the newly formed Public Access Committee gathered at the Selectboard meeting to receive their charge. They were instructed to look at all possible alternatives for a

boat launch location on Lake Garfield. They will meet monthly through the winter as they identify, evaluate, summarize, and finally make recommendations to the Board. The next meeting will be Monday, January 13, at 11 a.m. at Town Hall.

This and That

The Conservation Commission has requested a meeting with the Selectboard, the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board of Appeals to better coordinate permitting processes. The meeting will be Monday, January 27, at 7 p.m. The Monterey General Store has applied for a liquor license and should be able to offer wines and spirits before too long. The Highway Department is in the process of renewing

its blanket Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission. This allows it to proceed with tasks around sensitive areas without a review each time. During the past year fifty-eight building permits were issued, seven for new dwellings and a large number for additions, decks, and garages.

David McAllester has placed most of his property bordering Lake Garfield under a Conservation Restriction. While he reserves certain rights, it guarantees that there will be no further division of property and that that portion of the lakeshore will remain essentially undeveloped into the future.

— Michele Miller

Peter S. Vallianos Attorney at Law 528-0055

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Road Salt Report from the Highway Department

For the last few years the Town of Monterey has been using more salt on the paved roads for ice and snow control than before. It has been very effective in eliminating buildup of ice and hard-packed snow on the roads during the winter months, and has made our roads much safer. The number of accidents and the number of accidents with personal injuries have dramatically fallen during the winter months. The downside is, it is salt and it is corrosive and has an effect on plants and shallow wells. This past year we have been experimenting with a new "blend" of road salt. The road salt is mixed with a product called "Clear Lane." Clear Lane is the registered trade name of a group of agricultural by-products, which have been patented for use as a roadway de-icing/anti-icing agent and as a corrosion inhibitor.

Clear Lane is the concentrated liquid residue of the fermentation and industrial processing of agricultural products. Some

of the base stocks or raw materials used are cane or beet sugar syrup (molasses), corn, barley, and other crops, and milk. It can be described as fermented grain or other base stock with much of the sugar removed. Processing, fermentation, and concentration of these base stocks causes changes in the residue, creating ice-melting properties.

When mixed with road salt Clear Lane dramatically reduces the effective working temperature of salt to well below zero. In addition to that, it dramatically reduces the corrosiveness of salt to less than that of tap water, as shown by Washington State DOT tests. It adheres to the road surface more effectively than dry salt, minimizing loss of de-icer from wind and traffic scatter, providing more efficient de-icing. Clear Lane is unique. It uses the first abundant, cost effective, nontoxic, biodegradable anti-icing/de-icing agent ever identified.

This winter we will be using more of this product to determine how we can best protect our environment at the same time as keeping our roads safe for travel. Hopefully, by using more of this mixture we can reduce the quantity of actual road salt that is used.

— Maynard Forbes,
Director of Operations
Dept. of Highways, Buildings
and Properties

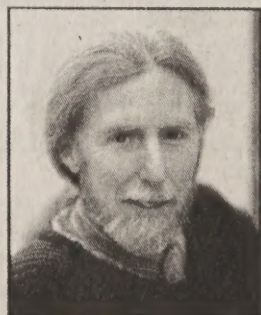
LGA Seeks Answers from Select Board

The Lake Garfield Association, in an effort to understand important issues concerning Lake Garfield, has sent the following letter to the Selectboard:

Dear Members of the Select Board,

The Lake Garfield Association is strongly committed to maintaining the quality of Lake Garfield and its environs as well as making the Lake and its use a focal point for the community. Since 1989 LGA has been involved in a significant number of science-based studies regarding management of the lake. This organization obtained testing for mercury levels in fish, assessed weed control, seepage of nutrients into the lake, weevil augmentation and has funded repeated assessment of plant growth, including type and location, in order to provide the Town with information accurate to the latest scientific standards of lake management. We have worked in cooperation with organizations such as the Massachusetts Bureau of Fisheries, Middlebury College, and BSC and Environmental Science, as well as the Lakes and Ponds Association (LAPA). In presenting the studies, LGA has opted for moderation and been a proponent of science-based

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intervention for the lake as opposed to a quick fix of any noted problems.

At the present moment, the lake appears quiescent but in reality the seeds of next summer's weeds and residents' concerns are incubating. There is a need to clarify and understand how both the forces of nature and the actions of various levels of government are impacting the lake. Fine-tuning of the human elements to work with nature is essential for the health of the lake and, not unimportantly, the future tax base of the Town. So that we can be useful in communicating information regarding lake issues, we need answers to the following questions and are looking to the Selectboard to provide clarification:

1) Was the drawdown application made in a time frame that allowed for the drawdown to proceed fully and accomplish both flood control and weed control, eliminating the potential need for either chemical control or weed harvesting in the near future? What were the conditions (referred to in the December *Monterey News*) that the DEP required as part of this year's drawdown—and what are the conditions for future drawdowns?

2) Who is actually responsible for filing the application for drawdown and when is the deadline for filing each year?

3) What is the Town's exact legal authority with respect to lake matters and how does it execute this responsibility?

4) A committee has been formed by the Town to address the question of a ramp for boat access to comply with state regulations. What is the charter given to this committee?

5) What is the Town's position regarding a public access ramp beyond the need to comply with the State mandate? What other conditions have to be met to satisfy the State?

6) Are there any concerns with the present beach site?

7) Loosestrife is encroaching much of the shoreline along Brewer Pond. What plans does the Town have for addressing this problem? What is the procedure if individual property owners wish to correct the problem on their own?

LGA perceives that it can provide a useful function by making sure that its members and the community at large have complete and accurate information from which they can formulate and voice their own views. We hope to hear from you on the preceding issues in a time frame that allows our Steering Committee to take up these issues at our next meeting, January 13th, as we consider how and what role LGA might best play in working with the Town to protect and preserve the lake for our community.

— Kathie Frome, President
For the LGA Steering Committee

January Activities at Fairview Hospital

Parkinson's Exercise Group: Mondays. 1–2 p.m. At South Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Garage. Call 413-528-8600 ext. 3140. Referral required. \$5 per session.

Cholesterol, Blood Pressure and Glucose Screenings: Fridays. 9–noon. Drop-in. Free.

Diabetes Care Program: Mondays. Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27. 2–4 p.m. In the ground floor conference room. \$5 per session.

Wellness, Exercise and Weight Management Program: Begins Jan. 9 for 10 weeks. 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. At Studio 21. Call 413-528-8600 ext. 3010 for more info. \$150 for 10 sessions.

Helping Hearts Support Group: January 8, "Strategies for Sticking with your Treatment Plan: Issues Surrounding Life-Style Changes." Sharyn Hickey, RN, MS, FNP.

Moms with More: Tuesdays. January 6 and 21 10:30–12noon. At the Family Center. Please call 413-528-1470 for more information.

Screenings in the Community: Free screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, and glucose. At Searles Middle School. 6–9:30 p.m.

Inspirational Group for those who have Breast Cancer: January 9. 5–6:30 p.m. In the Medical Library.

For more information contact: Amy Demarest, Project Coordinator, Community Relations Dept., Fairview Hospital: 413-528-0790 ext. 3010.

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Support Local Agriculture!

What could bring one hundred farmers, directors of Land Trusts, cheesemakers, organic food activists, orchard owners, county and state agriculture employees, representatives of regional food networks, and local economy supporters to Gedney Farm for an eight-hour conference on the day after a six-inch snowstorm? If you guessed "sustainable agriculture," you'd be right. Of course, an elegant lunch prepared by chef Peter Platt helped motivate these dedicated people to trudge through the snow on Thursday, December 12, for the third Annual Northeast Local Food & Farm Initiatives program.

A veritable "Who's Who?" of local agriculture from four states were in attendance. Cathy Roth, the energetic and talented educator from UMass's Agroecology program chaired the event. Brad Wagstaff, owner of Gedney Farm and Old Inn on the Green, donated the meeting place and the lunch as his tribute to local farming. And in a gesture testifying to the importance of local agriculture to the region's economy, Sharon Palma, Director of the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, attended, listening attentively to the various speakers.

Chef Platt took the "buy local" theme seriously, serving squash soup from Lowland Farm produce and cheesecake prepared with Rawson Brook Farm's chevre. The veal accompanying the roasted vegetable risotto came from Berkshires naturally raised grass-fed veal.

A full wheel of Gould Farm cheddar cheese was served as the meeting began, along with Macuon and Mutsu apples furnished by Jim Kelly of Woodside Orchards in Sheffield. (The apples, though, were from his brother's farm in Maine,

since Berkshire farmers lost their apple crops this year.)

The dozen speakers at the conference each received a newly published pamphlet by Monterey resident Rena Gill, "Straight From the Farm: Farmers and Local Food and Farm Groups Tell How They Are Changing Farming in the Northeast." This charming booklet highlights "buy local" campaigns from the Berkshires, Vermont, and the Hudson Valley, with interviews of farmers from each area attesting to the benefits of the sustainable agriculture movement.

Two years ago the number of local food and farm initiatives in the Northeast could be counted on the fingers of one hand; today there are more than fifty. A number of the speakers on December 12 were those who had either helped create farmers' markets or food distribution networks, or farmers whose heartfelt appreciation for these efforts was direct and appealing.

For example, Martin Stosiek of Markristo Farm in Hillsdale, an articulate exponent of local farming, shared the knowledge he's gleaned from thirteen years as an organic farmer. Katie Smith, of the Farm at Millers Crossing in Columbia County, recounted her involvement with the formation of two farmers' markets. Allison Gladstone, from the "Buy Local, Eat Fresh" initiative of far north Hancock County, Maine, discussed

the intriguing farm surplus distribution network created there two years ago. Amy Cotler, the energetic director of Berkshire Grown, lectured on the success of our "buy local" campaigns. Doug Hammond, a Pioneer Valley businessman who heads Valley BALLE, intrigued listeners with his discussion of his region's success in "living economy" initiatives.

Other speakers addressed school food, fund-raising projects, changes in state laws to help local agriculture, and urban food initiatives.

People attending the conference came from different types of communities, organizations, and backgrounds. Some were new farmers, like Leslie

Taft who will be marketing her organic mushrooms at farmers' markets next summer. Others, like Monterey's own Dick Tryon, were veterans of the local agriculture movement. The obvious common thread, though, was the strong sense of pride they all take in assisting local agriculture, saving open space, and making it bountiful again.

Please note that this was the third annual conference, a sure sign that there will be another next year. If you'd be interested in attending, please contact Laurie Cadorette, UMass Extension, 30 East Housatonic, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

—Laurily Epstein



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Green Corner Bulletin

Power of Choice

We are all so busy that at times, hasty decisions are made which may not yield the best outcomes. I believe that if people were aware of alternatives, they would make decisions that better protect their family's health and the environment.

The Berkshires are experiencing a building and growth boom. With this growth come concerns regarding impacts on human health, landscapes and wildlife, and water and air quality. This Green Corner Bulletin will share practical information for Monterey residents and friends. Your comments, questions and contributions are welcome.

Now that winter is upon us, people are spending more time inside. Common cleaning products may contain toxic chemicals which can impact indoor air quality. Here is some information on safer cleaning alternatives for your inside jobs.

Suggested Alternative Products or Techniques

Dishwasher detergent: Bi-O-Kleen; Life Tree; Country Save; Seventh Generation.

- Drain Cleaner: plunger; plumber's snake; to prevent clogs, pour 1/2 cup baking soda and then 1/2 cup vinegar down drain—wait 15 minutes and flush with boiling water.

- Dusting: Remove shoes at doormats placed at all entrances; vacuum mats.

- Furniture Polish: almond oil; lemon oil; orange oil.

- Laundry Bleach: Ecover; Seventh Generation; Arm & Hammer; Country Save.

- Oven Cleaner: Easy-Off Non-Caustic Formula; vinegar (1/4 cup to quart of water).

- General Cleaner: 1/4 cup vinegar in 1 quart water; add lemon juice for scent.

The above suggestions are extracted from information provided by CET and the Washington Toxics Coalition. For more information, contact CET at 1-800-238-1221 or visit: www.cetonline.org or www.watoxics.org.

— June Rochedieu



Eleanor Kimberley

Plans For T1 Line Grind to a Halt

Despite great interest last summer in setting up a T1 Internet line for people in Monterey and vicinity, efforts to get this project moving have stalled. A group met at the end of August and those in attendance agreed to move forward with a local provider who volunteered to do the

necessary work and gave assurances that he had the capability and interest to make such service available. Unfortunately nothing has been heard from the provider for nearly two months. Len Simon, who organized the original meeting, says that it would now appear that there is little likelihood of T1 service until someone else comes on the scene with a genuine interest and true capacity to do so.

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South Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste Collaborative

Seventeen towns in the South Berkshires joined together two years ago to launch the Southern Berkshire Regional Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Program. This award-winning program runs from July 1 to June 30 each year, with collections seasonally May through October. According to Sheffield Recycling Coordinator and steering committee member, David Steindler, "The program has been far more successful than we ever thought possible".

Eight collection opportunities have already taken place this year, six at the three mini sites in Lenox, Otis, and Great Barrington, where residents could bring unused oil-based paint and motor oil. Two comprehensive HHW collections were held in Stockbridge and Great Barrington where residents disposed of pesticides, cleaning products, mercury fever thermometers, automotive supplies,

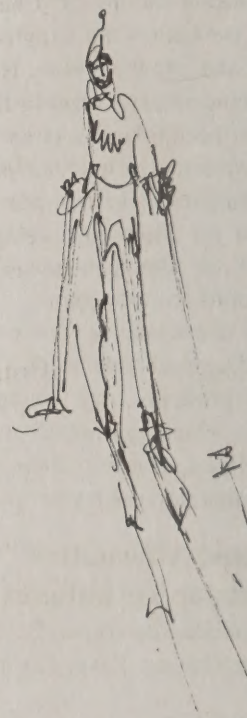
driveway sealants, solvents and many other common household products. Over 440 residents participated in at least one collection and more than 4,600 gallons of hazardous waste were collected and disposed of properly. In addition, about 2000 gallons of paint and 450 gallons of motor oil have been collected at the three mini sites.

This regional program is overseen by a six-member steering committee, composed of five representatives from the participating towns and the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Western Massachusetts Municipal Recycling Incentive Program Coordinator, Arlene Miller. The steering committee has contracted with the Center for Ecological Technology (CET) from Pittsfield to coordinate the program. CET reported that about 500 residents were served with information about hazardous waste disposal by phone as a result of this program.

The members of the steering committee are pleased at the success of the program in its second year. According to Greg Federspeil, Lenox Town Manager and steering committee member, "This program provides access for residents in South Berkshire to safely dispose of household hazardous chemicals at a minimal cost to each town. This is one regional program that really works."

The steering committee anticipates continued success once the mini site collections resume in May and June 2003.

For more information about the regional HHW collection program, contact Jamie Cahillane at CET (413-445-4556)



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Senator Says

As we look toward 2003, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a safe and happy New Year. Some of you may be aware that the Senate district I represent has expanded because of redistricting and now includes the Towns of Ashfield, Chesterfield, Conway, Goshen, Huntington, Westhampton, and Williamsburg. However, I will no longer be representing the Towns of Blandford, Chester, Granville, and Tolland. It has been my great pleasure to serve these towns in Hampden County, and I look forward to developing new relationships in the Berkshire, Hampshire and Franklin District.

New Legislative Session

In December, I submitted numerous bills for the next legislative session that reflect a wide range of issues facing western Massachusetts. The bills address economic development, environmental protection, health care and human services, and many other matters. Like many of the constituents I hear from, I firmly believe that we must continue our efforts to make Massachusetts an attractive place for families to live, businesses to thrive, and visitors to appreciate. The initiatives I have filed seek to further these goals.

One bill I filed would provide universal health care for every Massachusetts resident. Access to affordable health

care is a necessity that many of our residents are going without. Put simply, the present health care system is not working effectively in Massachusetts. Costs keep spiraling upward, and as a result, fewer people are receiving coverage. While we do have some worthy programs in place, such as Prescription Advantage, my bill would create a single payer system to help alleviate the overall stresses on our health care system.

Part of my legislative agenda also includes a downtown revitalization bill that would eliminate sales tax in traditional commercial districts, and provide a tax exemption for real estate that is rented to artists for less than fair market value. We need to attract businesses to fill empty storefronts, and design incentives for people to return to our downtowns in order to create jobs and economic growth.

I am also seeking to modernize laws to strengthen the economic environment in Massachusetts. I filed a comprehensive banking reform bill that will update the antiquated banking statutes. The bill addresses a range of consumer and industry concerns, from Internet banking and the digital divide, to regulatory revision and parity between state and federal institutions. Creating an efficient banking environment in Massachusetts is key to maintaining a healthy banking system and will provide consumers with more choices.

Many of the bills I filed are designed to preserve natural resources in the state. One would direct the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to establish protected reserves around old growth forest stands in areas of the state which meet the specific characteristics of old growth forest. The bill would prohibit expanded recreational use, active timber management practices, and new commercial, industrial, or roadway development in old growth areas. I am also sponsoring legislation that would direct the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to provide grants to municipalities and other public bodies of up to 50 percent of the cost of closing a landfill or solid waste facility. For many of the towns in my district, the cost to cap and close landfills is well beyond their budgetary means. This bill would provide the necessary state assistance to municipalities that are complying with DEP orders to cap and close landfills.

As mentioned above, I filed many other bills of local and statewide interest, and I will keep you apprised of their progress. Please feel free to contact me either at 413-442-6810 or 617-722-1625, or visit my website at www.nuciforo.com.

— State Sen. Andrea F. Nuciforo, Jr.

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One More Time, and the Sky is Yours

Hold to the dream —

*Remember the one you sang from the swing
when your hair smelled of honeysuckle
and your knees kicking skyward
were smooth and green with grass?*

Remember you wanted to be

*an astronaut,
an actress,
a singer of songs —
You wanted to dance when the rains came
and would squeal
when your brother wore your gown,
bowing like a prince.*

Hold to the dream —

*Remember the sparked luster of the days,
even when you could not explain
the anguish of twilight —
spring kept its promise in budding forsythia*

Somehow, the years have folded your dreams

*in attic drawers
with half-written songs
and sketches of the galaxy, yellowing
with Broadway ticket stubs.*

Hold to the dream —

*Even if you are too dizzy to sit on the swing —
Pretend.
Let us find the words to write your song
across the sky, with bared toes
even though your furrowed knees creak with defiance
let your feet touch the moon —
and you are the astronaut,
the actress,
the singer of songs
Your dreams, they are whispering —
a divine sigh
still asking to be lived.*

— M. Hamilton 12/02

The Powers of Janus

There are already

parts of me

*keening my own death
and there are other parts
pressing at the womb*

crying desperately to be born —

every day I learn more

about gateways

suffer confusions

Janus never knew

*it seems we give permission
or deny it*

to forces —

who am I or is anyone

to make such decisions?

and yet we do this

all the time

like gods, like gods.

— A. O. Howell

House in Winter

*A roof that hides beneath its new-found hood,
a fireplace that welcomes every flame.*

*A staircase that we climb with creaky tread,
and icicles that hang from window frames.*

*The old front porch has seen much better days;
its painted floor is peeling more and more.*

*In wind, the deck in back both slants and sways,
there's snow piled up against the kitchen door.*

*The drive up to the house requires care;
it's slippery on our hill when there's a storm.*

*But winter's beauty trumps the frigid air;
and inside we are warm and safe from harm.*

When nature challenges it has its reasons.

A house responds by facing all the seasons.

— Edwin Schur

Blood Music

*I tried telling her
over soup,
thick and warm like blood,
although I didn't think
she would understand.
We had fallen asleep
the night before, spooning,
she a rich liquid
I enveloped and absorbed.
I was cold when she left
for church in the quiet morning.*

*The mud speckled and caked
my calves and shins as I ran
through drops of rain towards
the banjos and saxophones.
Eventually I was part
of the crowd, wedged
between sludgy mudwater
and dancing strangers,
needing to urinate.*

*She walked to church
by herself. The cold
wind tightened and cracked
her face as she stepped
in curbside water pools
and blocked the rain
with a pink umbrella.
She stepped inside the church
and sat in the back row
as the service began.*

*The sun went down.
The music slowly
flowed through the cold
from the stage to the crowd.
I lost track of time. Suddenly
each note was a heated splash
as the musicians dug
into the hearts of their instruments
and let the blood run free.
I sang the words at the concert
like she sang the words of the hymn
in church, as the vibrant organ
resonated inside her lungs
and stayed there afterwards
as she battled the outside cold.*

*It's like this soup, she said,
holding my hand.
It's warm and it fills you up
when it's cold outside,
like music,
like the music of blood
beating time in your wrist
that I hold in my hand.*

— Jacob Aron Weisman





Winter Tracking Program

The Highland Communities Initiative is sponsoring a winter tracking program on January 25th. John McCarter, senior staff instructor with Paul Rezendes Nature Programs will be leading a hike from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Windsor. Through this outdoor field trip, participants will learn to recognize the clues animals leave behind and begin to understand how the forest "speaks." Participants will also examine different types of vegetation for signs of browsing, look for tracks and follow animal trails, examine scat, and search for other signs of the area's inhabitants. Participants will be required to bring snowshoes if there is heavy snowfall. The cost is \$20. Preregistration is required and space is limited. For more information or to register, contact Wendy Sweetser at (413) 587-0716 extension 14.

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The King Is Dead, Long Live the King!

Once again we have come through our darkest time, survived solstitial dangers, internal and external, and emerged blinking into the bright light of January. In earlier centuries, particularly in pagan parts of Europe, some people believed that this could only be accomplished year after year by dint of wild partying in late December. There were the Wassail, the music, the bonfire. There was even the symbolic bold slaughter of the king of winter—personified by a very small bird. Revellers would hunt down a little brown wren, beat it to smithereens, and then "drag" it through the town, singing about their victory. I know it sounds crazy. The idea of dragging anything so weightless as a wren, even a lifeless one, is ludicrous. Well, so it seems from here; I mean what would you drag it with or by? What sort of rope? But we have to admit it worked at the time. There are more than a few highly nutty items going down in our so-called modern times right about now that should make us hesitate to throw stones in a glass building, if you know what I mean. Let us not criticize our forebears for beating up on a few wrens in the name of bringing on the spring. They actually believed this was the only way!

Fortunately, these kings keep on coming. No sooner do you knock one down than another pops up and so the seasons turn and the cycle circles 'round. Our woods, even in the clear cold of January, are hopping and buzzing with little kings. If you go out in the snow on skis, in that blanketed hush you may think you are alone on the planet. You may stop your swooshing and stand looking up through the twiggery at the blue bye-and-bye, and suddenly you are joined by little angels with wings. They have come straight from God and they are not silent. If you don't spot them right away you may think your tinnitus has taken a turn for the worse because there is such a twittering and high-pitched busy-ness right in your ears that your precious silent solitude is . . . altered.

Look carefully, if your eyes have not gone the way of your ears in recent years, and you will see little round creatures against the sky. They are the kinglets, *Regulus sp.*, and they are usually attended by titmice, nuthatches, brown creepers, and chickadees. In England, where the little winter birds are well-loved nowadays, even at solstice, the kinglets are called "goldcrests." My *Kingfisher Guide to the Birds of Britain and Ireland* by John Gooders describes them charmingly as: "Smallest British bird; tiny but decidedly rotund, with shortish tail. Crown has

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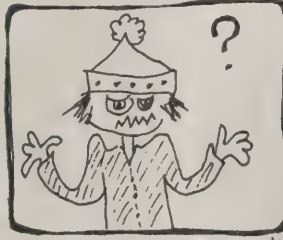
Uh-oh. Pagans coming.



We need to bludgeon a bird, symbolizing the King of Winter. Do it every year at this time....



(Shssshh.) No birds here. Darn.



Puzzled. Thought I saw one with a crown and all.



Hooray for coverable badges, Pagans leaving.

distinctive golden-orange blaze bordered by black. Face remarkably plain with large, dark eyes and fine moustachial streak. Back olive-green; wings black with broad white margins and clear, single (sometimes double) wingbar. Underparts buffy white. Ever-active; flicks wings continuously during non-stop search for food among trees... in winter often associates with tit flocks." (In England when they want to say "chickadee" they say "tit.")

Here in New England we have two kinds of kinglets, the ruby-crowned and the golden-crowned. These crowns are what bird-behavior scientists call "coverable badges." This means sometimes you see them, sometimes you don't. Redwing blackbirds have coverable red badges on the shoulders of their wings and often they are not visible for reasons of efficacy. In fact, coverable badges have evolved in birds whose systems for claiming and maintaining territories have certain things in common:

1. the owners are likely to be evicted by intruders;
2. males often go intruding in search of food or available territories;
3. the birds are likely to fight seriously, causing injuries;
4. males do not know whether they are going to be territory owners or "floaters" (adult males who are unable to establish territories).

Given these kinds of uncertainties, it is a good idea to fly the kind of pennant that can quickly be run down or turned into a truce flag. These are discreet forms of valor, in birds as well as in people.

The little kings are sensible, thoroughly modern with their hideaway crowns. They also go about in mixed

flocks, which is a good example of "strength in diversity" and one which bigger kings might study to their adaptive advantage. When you are small with shortish tail and there are large predators about, you benefit from mixed-talent perspective and lookout abilities. You also find that where other little bug-eaters are stirring up the insects there are likely to be extra meals flying around for you. In winter when the insects don't fly so much as wedge themselves under bark for the long cold coma, the more foragers there are in your group, exhibiting slightly different methods of insect-detecting, the better your own chances are of finding enough meals to keep you warm through the night. Ask the warblers, the tits, and the creepers: mixed flocks work. Many insect eaters have to make long dangerous trips south to keep eating when winter comes to Massachusetts. The little kings and their colleagues have found that if you team up and stick together, you can make it. They fly together, find food together, and keep up a constant chatter in their different languages. I don't say there is a lesson for us bigger kings here, I just say it looks busy, productive, and peaceable.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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The Thread of the Story:

Kuna Critters

It could only be called a luxury cruise. There I was, beneath the Southern Cross again, but this time on a sailing vessel with a French registry and, more importantly, a French chef. We'd stopped at, on average, two islands a day to snorkel as we sailed the Pacific coast of Central America. Now we were in the Panama Canal: historic and interesting, but of course, no snorkeling. Was the best part of the adventure over? Almost.

But we left the canal and entered the waters around the Kuna Islands, home of a people renowned for their stitchery. And the weather was bright, warm, gentle, perfect for landing and scouting the wares. The Kuna are a small but sturdy people. If the coral reef foundations of their tiny home islands stay healthy, they will have time for the talents of their fiber artists—many more men than women—to be even more widely recognized. Currently they're well known for their traditional *molos* (to be discussed next month.)

But as I wandered through paths lined with palm trees and fabric hung on clothesline like laundry, what also caught my eye was a cluster of little figures. They were wild and fanciful critters, each one appliqued in solid colors on a little square of black fabric, each one embellished with simple embroidery stitches. Nothing but cotton thread on pieces of cotton cloth. Some were animals I could identify, others purely whimsical. Nothing special but their naive artistry. I fell in love. I brought a few home. I grin whenever I look at them. Maybe you're grinning at the illustrations here, too. And may your new year be full of serendipity.

— MaryKate Jordan



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Notes from Greenhaven Farm Winter Gardening



We believe that eating a vegetable just minutes after it was plucked or dug from the garden is one of life's great pleasures. To that end we have always tended a small garden. We were once coordinators of a community garden as well as founding members of the Intervale Farm, a CSA (community supported agriculture), when we lived in Burlington, Vermont. We dreamed of one day leaving what poet and farmer Wendell Berry calls "the quick profit, the annual raise, vacation with pay, and everything ready-made." So last winter we started calling ourselves "farmers" and proceeded to plan a very large garden at our newly named Greenhaven Farm, located on Main Road next to the firehouse. Were it not for the support of Monterey farmers, gardeners, neighbors, fresh food lovers, and many wonderful visitors to our farm stand we would never have succeeded. Thank you every one!

CHARLES J. FERRIS Attorney at Law



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One of our favorite questions from customers was, "What do you do in the off-season?" Having never had one before we were stumped. Now we know the answer. We read seed catalogs! It's time to snuggle into a comfy chair and dream of next summer's bounty. Paging through seed catalogs with their glossy color pictures, one can get carried away and start checking off only the most beautiful. But there are so many other things to take into account when selecting seeds than just appearance. Some catalogs are more helpful than others. We want to share some of our favorite catalogs and tell you about those of some other Monterey gardeners.

You've probably enjoyed Monterey Chevre from Susan Sellew's Rawson Brook Farm or slurped Monterey Maple Syrup from Bonner McAllester's sugar house. Both of these women also have great vegetable gardens. Their favorite catalog comes from Fedco Seeds. Find it on the internet at www.fedcoseeds.com. It is printed on newsprint without color glossy photos. Susan and Bonner appreciate the very good editorial comments and advice, great tool selections, and bulk prices. Fedco, located in Maine, is a cooperative enterprise that passes profits back to members/customers. Their seeds are of exceptional quality—good germination and production.

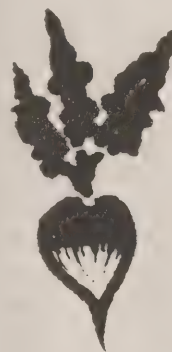
Susan and Bonner also refer to Johnny's Selected Seeds located, in Albion, Maine (207-437-4395.) Johnny's seeds are especially popular with northern gardeners whose growing seasons are

short and summers are cool. They have a good reputation for quality that is reflected in their higher prices. They do have great color pictures and editorial content. Johnny's has extensive test gardens where they evaluate seed quality and create new varieties especially suited for the north. We have relied on Johnny's ourselves for many years.

Richard Tryon of Lowland Farm is known for his squash, but Barbara is the family vegetable gardener. They both primarily use Harris Seeds (800-544-7938). Along with Burpee and Parks, Harris is one of the granddaddies of the mail order industry. Dick likes the bulk seed prices (although they are never low enough!). The Harris catalog is dense with lots of color and editorial content. While it is geared to a national customer base it clearly identifies northern varieties. It is sad to see all those delicious vegetables that need a 120-day growing season.

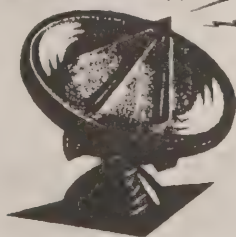
Another Maine seed company we have used is Pinetree Garden Seeds (207-926-3400.) Pinetree has the added advantage of offering small packets of seeds at very low prices, so one can afford to try a new or different variety without a big investment. Most backyard gardeners would find these packets plenty adequate for anything they'd like to grow, and there is little or no waste.

A small company that we ordered from extensively for the first time last year is located in northern Vermont and specializes in organically grown seeds of open-pollinated varieties, many of which



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Glynis Oliver

A Road with Two Names

At the winter solstice, as we venture into the next season that has already come on with a vengeance, our country roads piece together scenes of the winter landscape like agricultural patterns of a patchwork quilt. If you dare to find your way upon those not paved and less traveled, they will lead you back in time to hill towns, hinterland settlements, and even the old stagecoach Inn on the Green. As you come back, you may notice that the name of the same road has changed with the direction you are traveling.

Even some of our more traveled roads like River Road, which appropriately runs along the Konkapot past the Fish Hatchery, have two names; near the driveway of the hatchery, which has acreage in both Monterey and Hartsville, River Road becomes Hatchery Road, the name you see when coming from the other direction. No wonder some highly intelligent visitors become disoriented when given directions by those that have lived here all their lives. Does it make sense that the name of the road depends on where you are going? It reminds me of the joke about the farmer who, when asked how to get to Boston, remarked, "You can't get there from here."

The New Marlboro Road is my favorite, leading almost from the center of Monterey to New Marlborough, as its name implies, even though the spelling over the years has come to be different.

have been passed down by generations of a family and hence are called "heirloom" varieties. High Mowing Seeds (802-888-1800) is the source of some of the most unusual and most successful vegetables we grew last year. Their "Long Pie Pumpkin" has earned a permanent place in our garden for its incredibly smooth texture and superb flavor. The fruits are long and narrow, more like an overgrown zucchini than a pumpkin, and they stay green-skinned long after they are picked—not at all like the familiar pumpkin we know. The pies we made from them were wonderful. The catalog tells us this is a rare Native American variety from northern Maine.

High Mowing Seeds was also the source of our popular "Boothby Blonde" cucumbers, another unlikely specimen of its kind and also exceptionally good. This variety was preserved and passed down by the Boothby family of Livermore, Maine. High Mowing Seeds acknowledges

the origins of their seed varieties whenever they are known. We find this information fascinating. Although there are no color pictures, there are lovely drawings and excellent descriptions of everything they offer. They are more expensive than other seed companies, but for certified organic seeds of heirloom varieties well adapted to the Northeast, we think they are worth it. We also like to patronize small local companies when we can, in hopes that they will flourish.

An eternal truth about people who grow things is that one is always learning something. We can learn a lot by reading, even more from other gardeners/neighbors who have tried different methods and found success or failure. Another great truth is that gardeners are faithful, knowing that while Mother Nature surrounds us with cold winds, snow, and ice, it is always summer in the heart of a gardener.

— Sally and Steve Pullen

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It leads you past Brookmead Farm, now residential, Lowland Farm, no longer a dairy, and across the old wooden bridge. There the road straight ahead is Harmon Road, named for one of the original settlers who Dick Tryon tells me was a harness maker. Harmon Road is no longer a through road. So take a left past Rawson Brook Farm to the next intersection with Wallace Hall Road, also named for an early settler, which leads to the left past the site of a waterfall mill, faintly marked on either side with old stone cellar holes of occupants long gone.

The New Marlboro Road there turns to the right. It is about five miles long, two of which are in Monterey and three in New Marlborough. So coming back, as you might expect, the name changes to The Old North Road, which is what they called it pointing in that direction from the New Marlborough Green. The road is a treasure, a nostalgic blending of woodlands, beaver ponds, and hayfields, intersected by streams and brooks that trickle under the roadbed even when covered by ice and snow. Just before you reach the Green, Harmon Road



comes in from your right where the Trustees of Reservations maintains the Dry Hill Reservation, with a parking lot and trails leading up to a vista of the magnitude of any of the local cobbles. It was there that the white raven that hung around the compost heap of Gould Farm was first seen by Jaimee Mullen, who lives nearby.

Perhaps you share with me an inspirational experience in exploring the adventure of old roads and logging trails. Recently they may be said to have taken us on a short trip from the warm glow of autumn directly into the cold and dark-

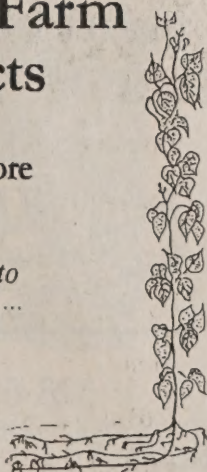
ness of winter. But now, looking to the year ahead, no matter what direction you travel, take comfort to know that they will bring spring and then summer. It will be but an inevitable journey, perhaps for some to the other side of the mountain, as to a light at the end of the tunnel, and it will bring us home again. In the words of an Irish poet, "May the wind be at your back, the sun shine on your face, and the road ahead rise up to greet you." Let me wish you a happy new year.

— George Emmons

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Sandisfield Arts Center Receives Grant

The Sandisfield Arts Center has received a \$1,000 grant from the General Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation for administrative assistance. Announcement of the grant was made by Jennifer Dowley, President of Berkshire Taconic, which approved the grant on December 16, 2002.

Irene Conley, President of the Sandisfield Arts Center, said the grant would be used to fund part-time assistance with membership, fund-raising, and outreach. Said Conley, "Administrative work is the means by which we have grown and prospered over the past few years and we are grateful to have some support for this area which is often overlooked by funding organizations."

The Sandisfield Arts & Restoration Committee was founded in 1995 to restore the historic arts center building and provide cultural and educational programming for the town of Sandisfield and neighboring towns. In spring, the entire lower level of the 1839 building will be renovated, thanks to grants from the National Trust and Massachusetts Historical Commission and generous matching donations from individuals.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that cultivates philanthropy in ways that have a direct positive impact in Berkshire, Columbia, northeast Dutchess, and northwest Litchfield counties. For more information, please contact Berkshire Taconic at 800-969-2823.



Maggie Leonard

Arnie Hayes entertained us at the Town retiree's celebration in May.

Personal Notes

Those celebrating birthdays in this first month of the new year are **Don Welsch** on the 3rd, **Barbara Tryon** on the 5th, **Evan Sylbert** on the 9th, **Cindy Hebert** on the 10th, **Jim Deloy** on the 11th, **Julian Mendel** on the 13th, **Bridget Mendel** on the 15th, **Laura Anne Dinan** on the 22nd, **Shelly Bynack** and **Emma Mielke** on the 26th.

Happy Anniversary to **Karl and Shirley Quisenberry** on the 1st, **Don and Carol Welsch** on the 5th and **Rick and Deborah Mielke** on the 9th.

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District has begun its series of theater offerings with the 3rd-6th grade production of *We The People*. Students from Monterey participating were **Keller Dinan** and **Laura Anne Dinan**, **Samantha Candee** and **Gabe Ibanez**. **Keller** not only had a part as "Sam" but

had a tap dance solo as well. Congratulations to you all. Future Mount Everett productions will be *Hello Dolly*, March 7,8,9; *Nobody Heard Me Cry*, April 11, 12, 13; *All Aboard For Broadway*, May 16, 17 & 18.

Congratulations to **Claire Mielke**, recipient of the DAR Good Citizen Award for Mount Everett. This award is given in recognition of a student's leadership qualities, community service commitment, dependability, and patriotism "to an outstanding degree." Recipients are chosen by the faculty of their respective schools. **Claire**, daughter of **Rick and Deborah Mielke**, is a senior at Mount Everett Regional in Sheffield.

— Deborah Mielke

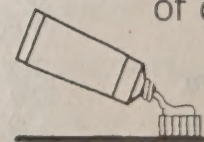
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Calendar

Every Monday (except holidays):

Selectboard meeting, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon, Town Offices.

Wednesday, January 8:

Community Dinner, 6 p.m., Meeting-house fellowship hall. George Emmons will give a presentation on the Native American Burial Cairns in Monterey. Bring a generous serving of food to share and help celebrate the new year.

Monterey Food Co-op order distribution and pickup, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Meetinghouse basement.

Thursday, January 9: Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30-3:30 p.m., Town Hall, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Monday, January 13: Public Access Committee meets at 11 a.m. at Town Hall. See Town News

Friday, January 17: Random Acts of Kindness Day.

Saturday, January 18: Full Moon

Monday, January 20: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. Town Offices closed.

Contributors

We are grateful to the following for recent contributions to the *Monterey News*. You keep us going.

Marie Leuchs
Donald Amstead
John and Stella Bodnar
Delight Dodyk
Alvin and Ann Richmond
Marc and Katherine Roberts

Saturday, January 25: Square and contradancing, 8:30-11:30p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Ralph Sweet. All dances are taught, beginners and children are welcome. Refreshments at intermission. Adults \$6, children \$3. Information 528-9385.



The Observer

November 26-December 25

High temp. (12/21) 54°
Low temp. (12/10) 0°
Avg. high temp. 33.5°
Avg. low temp. 17.1°
Avg. temp. 25.3°
Total precipitation
(rain and melted snow) 4.93"
Snowfall 34.5"
Precipitation occurred on 23 days.

Attention Recyclers!

Many thanks for all your recycling efforts over the past year! Over the holiday season, please be sure NOT to include these items in your paper mix:

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